



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS Highly Qualified Status and Michigan's Special Education Teachers January 2008

1. Q: What are the core academic subjects?

A: The core academic subjects, as defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind), are:

English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.
20 USC § 7801(11)
2. Q: What does "elementary" mean in relation to special education teachers?

A: Elementary instruction is K-5 classrooms (regardless of the setting), 6-8 classrooms if the setting is self-contained. Teachers in 9-12 classrooms where the students are assessed against 'alternate achievement standards' (Mi-Access) would need to meet the elementary level HQ requirements.
3. Q: What does "secondary" mean in relation to special education teachers?

A: Secondary instruction is 9-12 classrooms (regardless of the setting), 6-8 classrooms if they do not meet the definition of self-contained.
4. Q: What is a 'self-contained' classroom?

A: As defined in Michigan's rules for Teacher Certification (390.1101(r)), a self-contained classroom is "a classroom in which one teacher provides instruction to the same pupils for the majority of the pupils' instructional day." A 'self-contained' classroom is not defined in the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE), in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), or in No Child Left Behind (NCLB). A majority is anything more than 50%.
5. Q: Is 'self-contained' only a class in a center program?

A: No. As defined in Michigan's rules for Teacher Certification (390.1101(r)), a self-contained classroom is "a classroom in which one teacher provides instruction to the same pupils for the majority of the pupils' instructional day." A majority is anything more than 50%.
6. Q: Is 'self-contained' a class where all students take the Mi-Access?

A: No. As defined in Michigan's rules for Teacher Certification (390.1101(r)), a self-contained classroom is "a classroom in which one teacher provides instruction to the same pupils for the majority of the pupils' instructional day." A majority is anything more than 50%.

7. Q: If one student takes the MEAP does that void the 'self-contained' status?
- A: The statewide assessment that the students are taking does NOT DEFINE 'self-contained'. As defined in Michigan's rules for Teacher Certification (390.1101(r)), a self-contained classroom is "a classroom in which one teacher provides instruction to the same pupils for the majority of the pupils' instructional day." A majority is anything more than 50%.
8. Q: Is 'self-contained' a class where a specific group of students ONLY attend that classroom without exiting FOR ANY REASON?
- A: No. As defined in Michigan's rules for Teacher Certification (390.1101(r)), a self-contained classroom is "a classroom in which one teacher provides instruction to the same pupils for the majority of the pupils' instructional day." A majority is anything more than 50%.
9. Q: Does a special education teacher who is team-teaching core academic subjects with HQ general education teachers, also need to be HQ in those core academic subjects?
- A: No. As long as the assignment remains the same, i.e. team-teaching with a general education teacher who meets HQ requirements, the special education teacher does not need to be HQ in those core academic subjects.
10. Q: If students use a computer-assisted curriculum, such as Plato or NovaNet, must the teacher meet HQ requirements?
- A: No. The teacher is acting as a facilitator to the computer-assisted curriculum.
11. Q: If the teacher has a Master of Curriculum and Instruction degree, are they highly qualified?
- A: Yes, a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction is one of the general core curriculum based master's degrees that was listed in the March 2004 Flexibility Update that can be used to demonstrate competency in the core subject area(s) that was being taught at the time in which that master's degree program was completed. This is HOUSSE option #1.
12. Q: If the teacher has a Master's in the Art of Teaching (MAT), are they highly qualified?
- A: Yes, a Master in the Art of Teaching (MAT) degree is one of the general core curriculum based master's degrees that was listed in the March 2004 Flexibility Update that can be used to demonstrate competency in the core subject area(s) that was being taught at the time in which that master's degree program completed. This is HOUSSE option #1.

13. Q: If the teacher has a Master's in Special Education, are they highly qualified?
- A: A Master's degree in special education "in and of itself" cannot be used to verify that a teacher is HQ. However, it may be utilized as a part of HOUSSE option #1. If it can be identified that there are 18 semester credit hours within that program that are instructional in nature and content related, whereby the teacher increased their level of understanding/knowledge in teaching the core content to their students, they can be considered HQ by using HOUSSE option #1. (This holds true for any of the master's degrees listed as "inappropriate" for verifying HQ status in the March 2004 Flexibility Update.)
14. Q: Under what circumstances may a teacher of students with disabilities utilize the Elementary Education MTTC to demonstrate competency as an HQ teacher?
- A: A special education teacher at the elementary K-5 level may *continue* to utilize the Elementary Education MTTC. A special education teacher at the middle school 6-8 level may *continue* to utilize the Elementary Education MTTC as long as the classroom is self-contained. As defined in Michigan's rules for Teacher Certification (390.1101(r)) a self-contained classroom is "a classroom in which one teacher provides instruction to the same pupils for the majority of the pupils' instructional day." A majority is anything more than 50%.
- However, a special education teacher at the middle school 6-8 level who is the direct provider of core content in a departmentalized program, may *not* utilize the Elementary Education MTTC to demonstrate competency as an HQ teacher.
- A special education teacher at the secondary 9-12 level also may *not* utilize the Elementary Education MTTC, unless all of their students are assessed exclusively by alternate achievement standards (Mi-Access). If the students at the 6-12 level are assessed via Mi-Access, the Elementary Education MTTC would *continue* to be appropriate.
15. Q: If a teacher teaches special education students at the high school level, grades 9-12 and ALL of the students are assessed against Michigan's alternate assessment (Mi-ACCESS), does the teacher need to meet HQ requirements?
- A: Yes. If ALL of the students are assessed against Mi-ACCESS, the teacher needs to meet the ELEMENTARY HQ requirements. They may meet these requirements by taking and passing the Elementary Education MTTC (test #83) or completing one of the HOUSSE options.
16. Q: If a teacher teaches math at the secondary level and only ONE of the students takes the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) assessment, and the rest of the students take the alternate assessment, does the teacher need to meet HQ requirements?
- A: Yes. To meet HQ requirements the teacher must demonstrate competency in math. They may do this by having a major (or its equivalent), taking and passing the Math MTTC OR completing one of the HOUSSE options.

17. Q: Does a middle school special education teacher who teaches at various times, 6th-8th grade special education students, with a Michigan teaching certificate that was issued pre-1988 that reads 'Elementary K-8 (All Subjects)' meet HQ requirements for any core academic subject assignments at that level?

A: Completion of an Elementary Education program is not considered equivalent, by the USDOE, to having a MAJOR in all the core content areas. The teacher must verify they are HQ for all core academic subjects they teach by taking and passing the appropriate subject MTTC or completing one of the HOUSSE options.

18. Q: What is a teacher who has a Secondary 7-8 All Subjects teaching certificate highly qualified to teach?

A: Certification alone does not verify a teacher's HQ status in the core subject areas. The teacher must demonstrate competency as a highly qualified teacher in the core subject area(s) in which they are providing the direct instruction.

19. Q: For teachers to be Highly Qualified at the elementary level, if they provide direct instruction in core content to elementary students with disabilities, do they need to have passed the comprehensive elementary content exam or have completed the listed HOUSSE options?

A: Yes, this is correct. Completion of an Elementary Education program is not considered equivalent, by the USDOE, to having a MAJOR in all the core content areas. Those elementary teachers who gained initial Michigan certification after 1993 were required to take the Elementary Education MTTC and, with the appropriate documentation, should identify such on their HQT Reporting Form. Those elementary teachers certified prior to testing should have completed an 18 – hour planned program (HOUSSE option #1) in order to remain certificated in the state of Michigan. Either option can be utilized to verify HQ.

20. Q: Which Official Michigan Highly Qualified Teacher Report form should teachers use?

A: A teacher may be required to fill out multiple forms.

The Elementary Special Education Teacher Report form is to be utilized by any special education teacher that is providing the direct instruction to students with disabilities under the definition of elementary instruction. Elementary instruction is in a K-5 classroom (regardless of the setting), a 6-8 classroom if the setting is self-contained, OR a 9-12 classroom if the students are assessed by 'alternate achievement standards' (Mi-Access).

The Secondary Special Education Teacher Report form is to be utilized by any special education teacher that is providing the direct instruction to students with disabilities under the definition of secondary instruction. Secondary instruction is in a 9-12 classroom (regardless of the setting) or a 6-8 classroom if it does not meet the definition of self-contained.

21. Q: Do teachers of students with disabilities need core subject endorsements on their teaching certificates to become HQ, or are they allowed to go directly to a HOUSSSE option?
- A: Teachers who hold certification to teach students with disabilities HAVE endorsements that authorize them to teach all the core subject areas to students with disabilities (Cognitive Impairment SA, Learning Disabilities SM, Emotional Impairment SE, etc.); however, this does not meet the federal HQ requirements. They do not need to have the specific core subject endorsement in addition to these special education endorsement(s), but they must demonstrate they are HQ and can utilize any of the options that have always been available.
22. Q: Would a teacher who has a 30 Hour Continuing certificate (K-8 All Subjects), with an Emotional Impairment (SE) K-12 endorsement, as well as a minor in English, (but no endorsement on the certificate), who is teaching English in a secondary resource room and took the English MTTC, be considered HQ? Or would that teacher need to be endorsed in English first?
- A: As a special education teacher in a special education classroom, the only authorization needed on the teacher's certificate to teach English to students with disabilities is the K-12 special education endorsement. The teacher does NOT need to hold the specific English (BA) endorsement. Taking and passing the English MTTC has made that teacher HQ.

23. Q: Can a teacher be certified to teach, but not be highly qualified by NCLB standards?
- A: Yes. Teachers who are not assigned to teach core content subjects are not required to demonstrate that they are highly qualified, but they must be state certified to be assigned to teach in a Michigan classroom.
24. Q: Can a Special Education teacher who is not highly qualified in the content area provide direct instruction in that content area under the consultation of a highly qualified teacher and count this time as meeting the HQ requirements?
- A: No. The teacher must be HQ for the placement if they are providing the direct instruction.
25. Q: Can a co-teaching special education teacher share the responsibility of grading students in the core content area with the general education teacher who is providing the direct instruction?
- A: Yes.
26. Q: Within HOUSSE option #3, it states: "Demonstrated competence, as outlined in a local performance assessment of the employing district or school such as a portfolio, multi-subject portfolio, or classroom observation." Who is supposed to make the observation? Is there a certain format to be followed?
- A: The local district must submit its local performance assessment model to the MDE for approval. The Office of Professional Preparation Services (OPPS) does have a model assessment that has been developed for use by local districts with the proper training. The district should contact Dr. Frank Ciloski at 517/373-6791 if it wishes to pursue this option.
27. Q: Can special education teachers be reported as Highly Qualified (HQ) on the REP Report until summer of 2009?
- A: If a special education teacher is not considered HQ, the district must report the teacher as NOT HQ until the teacher demonstrates competency in each core subject they are assigned to teach. There will be no consequence to the district for not meeting the 100% HQT requirement through the June 30, 2009 REP collection. After the June 30, 2009 REP collection, there will be consequences if the district is still out of compliance.
28. Q: Could a school district use its professional development funds to help their teachers become highly qualified?
- A: Yes, most definitely.
29. Q: Does the Michigan Department of Education review HQ documentation, including transcripts?

A: No. Review of documentation for HQ, including transcripts, is done by the employing school district. However, the MDE does monitor the HQ status of teachers via the Michigan Technical Assistance Project (MiTAP) and provides technical assistance to districts.

30. Q: Who keeps documentation of a teacher's HQ status?

A: The employing school district will keep documentation of each teacher's HQ status. Teachers should keep copies of all documentation submitted to their employing school district.

31. Q: Would passage of a Praxis test demonstrate highly qualified status?

A: The Praxis test(s) can be used to verify HQ status in the core subject areas. Documentation would need to be provided to the employing school district to demonstrate that the Praxis test was specific to the content area in which competency is being demonstrated.

32. Q: Does the State Department keep records on the tests that a teacher has taken and passed (MTTC, Praxis)?

A: No, the teacher must maintain these records or request duplicate test scores directly from the testing company.